

# We Are AMTA: Evidence-Based Strategies for Volunteer Leadership

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## Abstract

This study provides information and insight about volunteer leadership experiences in the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) through data gathered from 35 music therapists across the country. Using Appreciative Inquiry (AI), an approach that focuses on what is working well, we discover:

- Meaningful and impactful experiences of volunteer leaders
- Practices to increase and sustain the volunteer leadership pipeline
- Increasing positive outcomes for AMTA and the field of music therapy

## Opportunity

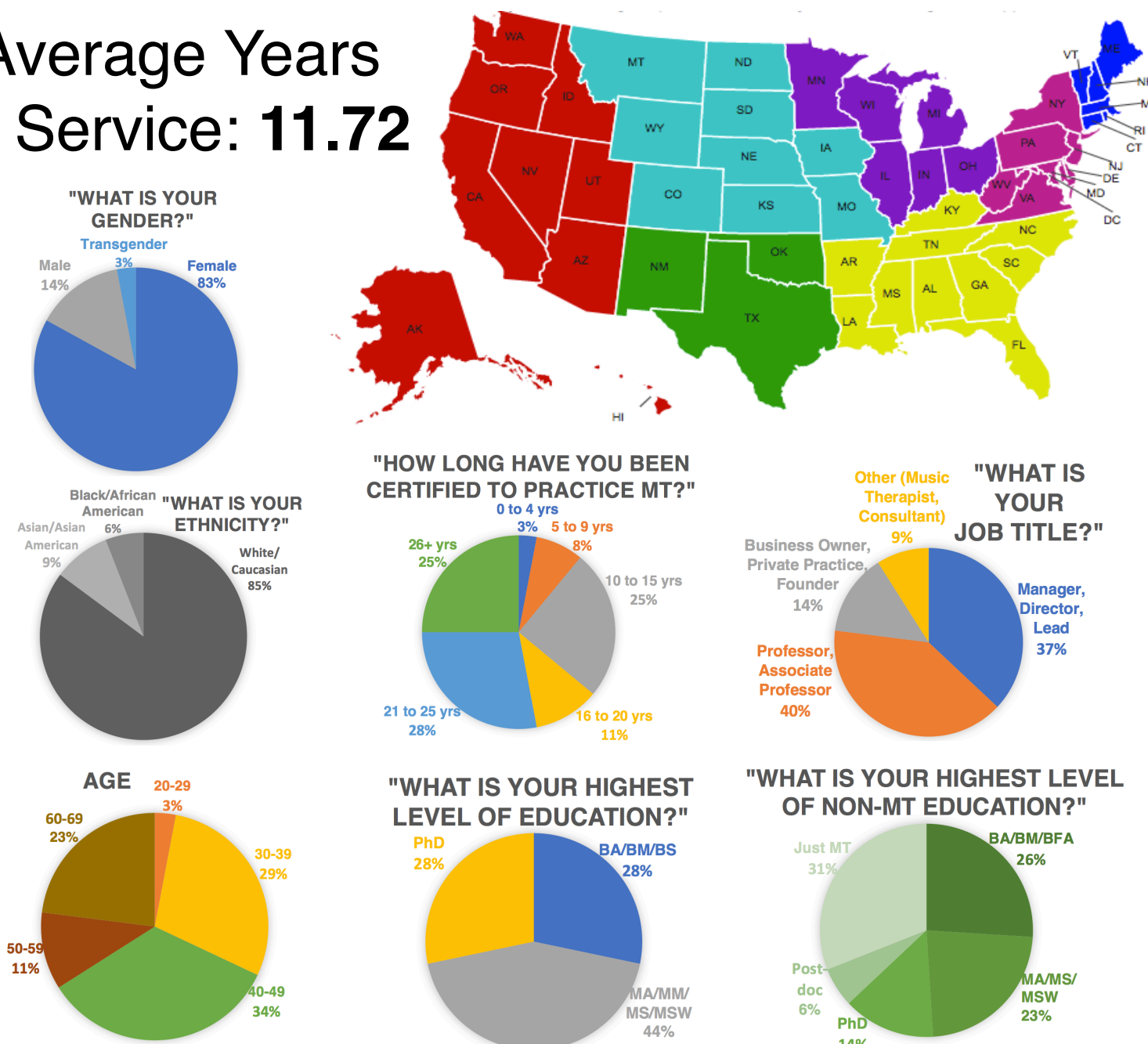
- How do we increase the AMTA volunteer leadership pipeline?

## Framework

Appreciative Inquiry, an approach to change management, posits that in any system there are almost always instances of things working well. Identifying and expanding those moments are one of the most powerful ways to create system-wide, self-reinforcing positive change.

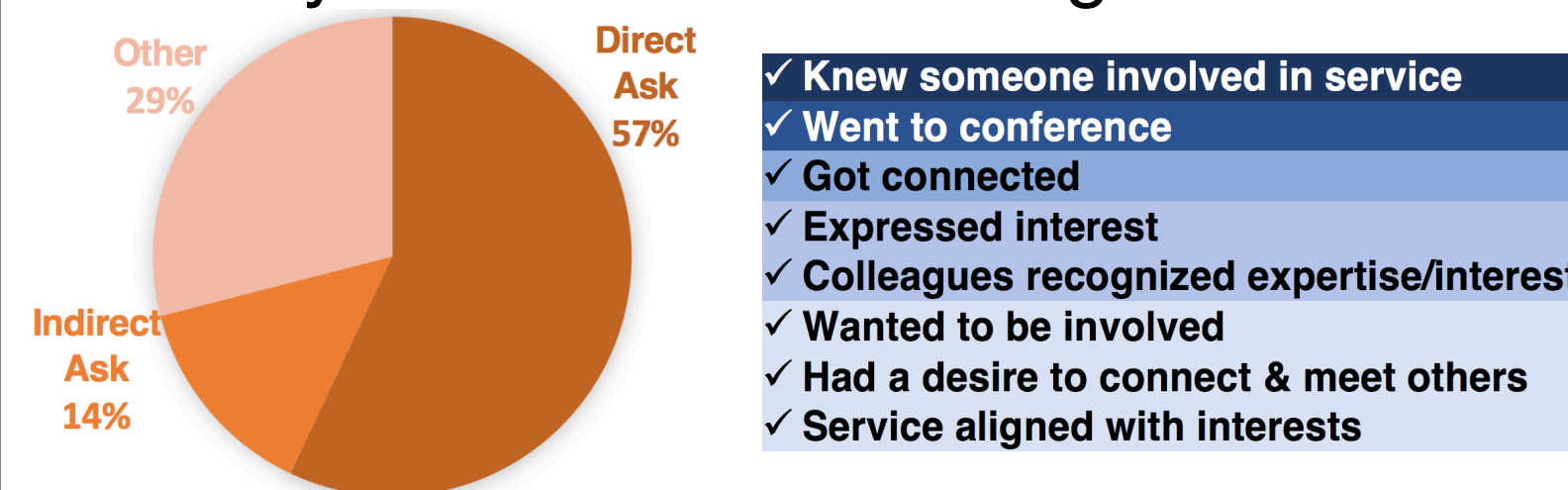
## Our Volunteer Leaders (VLs) 35 Leaders Representing 7 Regions

Average Years of Service: 11.72



## First Experiences and The Self

Over **two-thirds** of VLs were asked to serve by another VL. “What were some **specific steps** you took to get involved?”



“Describe what you **value** most about yourself”

- ✓ Listening
- ✓ Hearing all sides
- ✓ Openness
- ✓ Awareness
- ✓ Confidence

“Describe a time of **professional affirmation**”

Two-thirds of VLs felt professionally affirmed in service when **recognized by others**

## We Are AMTA

“People equate AMTA with national office, but **AMTA is not national office, AMTA is its membership**. We’re not sustainable if you just pay your dues and then expect things to happen without your involvement. Leadership comes in many different forms and sizes and there's work to be done and **there's room for everyone to be involved** in that work. There's a lot more we could accomplish if we could manage to pull in more people to be active within AMTA.”

—Participant #4

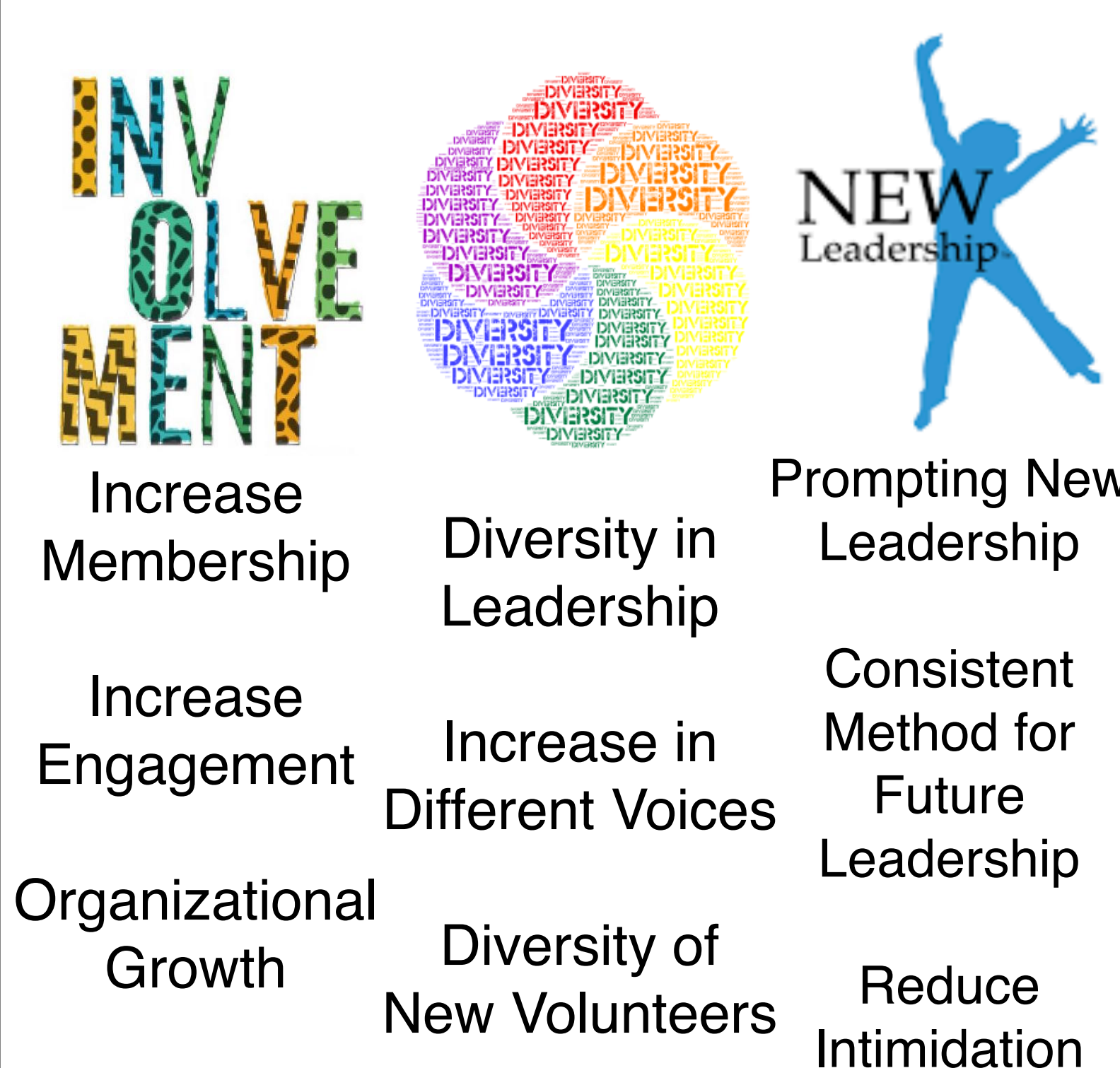
“Music therapy is really important and **we're in a profession that is not of a size where you can just be like, “oh well, someone else will do that,”** because it's entirely possible that in fact no one else will do that. If you have the time and the inclination, why wouldn't you help in any way that you can?”

—Participant #34

## Peak Experiences Energized



## Wishes for the Future



## References

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